

# Tunis

## I. Medley of Races Under the French Flag

By A. MacCallum Scott

Author of "Bartary," "Through Finland," etc.

IN the youth of the world, before the dawn of history, before Homer sang the fall of Troy, the earliest navigators groped their way cautiously westwards along the northern shores of Africa. We do not know who these first Argonauts were, whether they were of Tyre and Sidon, or of the Minoan kingdom of Crete, or of some earlier race of merchant adventurers, who have left their rude stone monuments scattered from the shores of the Persian Gulf to those of the English Channel and even the Baltic. Some record of their adventures survives in Greek legend, and formed the basis of the story of Ulysses. They sailed past the delta of the Nile, and along the parched shores of the Libyan desert, broken by occasional oases of palms. They visited the Lotos Island of Djerba in the Syrtes, and then they steered northward along the lagoons of the rich and fertile lowlands of Tunis. A mountainous promontory projected north-east towards Sicily. They rounded it, and the glorious prospect of the Gulf of Tunis was unfolded before their eyes. The gulf stretched south in a long regular curve, the

emerald waters being separated from the golden sand by a delicate edging of white surf. At the southernmost point, almost from the water's edge, as it seemed, there rose the cone of a volcanic mountain, terminating in a double peak which recalled the crescent-shaped horns of their god. On either side of this mountain, Bou Kornein, Father of Two Horns, as it is still called, two rivers descended into the gulf through the fruitful alluvial plains of Grombalia and Mornag.

From the western side of the gulf there extended inland a large shallow lagoon, and beyond it again another lagoon. A series of small heights terminating in a high cliff formed the tip of the western horn of the crescent, beyond which again was the estuary of the Medjerda, one of the largest rivers in North Africa. The panorama was surrounded by a distant wall of savage mountains with precipitous cliffs and jagged peaks.

About twelve centuries before Christ the Phoenicians, attracted by the wealth of the country, began establishing trading stations along this coast. The country was occupied by a people of



TYPICAL BEDUIN WOMANHOOD

Beduin women do not veil themselves. Their usual garment is blue, woven in one piece, secured on the shoulders with fibula brooches, and festooned with silver chains and charms



#### WIELDING THE FLY-WHISK AT A BAKER'S SHOP

Shops in the native quarter of Tunis are merely square windowless apertures in the walls of the foetid, swelteringly hot souks, or market places. Each souk has its particular trade, and in every shop, especially those where bread or meat or fruit is sold, the merchant squats or, with a long-tailed fly-whisk, vainly tries to keep off the flies that are the horrible plague of Tunis

*Photo, Donald McLeish*

the Berber race who still form the main North African stock from the town of Tunis to Morocco, and from the Mediterranean to the Sahara. From the native chiefs the Phoenicians acquired sites which gradually, as their commerce extended, developed into flourishing towns. Of these towns, Tunis was founded on the narrow neck of land between the outer and inner lagoons on the west side of the gulf; Utica grew up at the mouth of the Medjerda; and a little farther along the coast, in a sheltered bay, was Bizerta. Last of all, at the tip of the western horn of the Gulf of Tunis, where the cliffs of Sidi Bou Said descend abruptly into the sea, a fugitive princess from Tyre landed with her retainers and founded Carthage. She was the original of Virgil's immortal story of Aeneas and Dido.

Carthage grew and flourished and became the capital of the great maritime empire of the Phoenicians in the

western Mediterranean. While Persia and Greece disputed the mastery of the Eastern world, Carthage and Rome disputed the dominion of the West.

The three great Punic Wars decided that the civilization of Europe was to be Roman rather than Asiatic.

After a stern siege, which was resisted by the energy of desperation, in the year 146 B.C. Scipio, the Roman general, captured Carthage, the proudest and richest city in the Western world, and razed it to its foundations as a farmer destroys a nest of vipers. "Delenda est Carthago" (Carthage must be destroyed) said Cato. Rome was determined that the rival who had menaced her for centuries should never again raise her head.

For a generation Carthage lay vacant, a mouldering heap of ruins. Then Rome established a small colony, and almost before she realized what was happening, found herself involved in a career of conquest and development



## TUNIS & ITS PEOPLES

in Africa. Carthage rose again from the ashes, a mighty city, the capital of a Roman province which soon began to outshine Italy itself in wealth, in luxury, in art, and in the magnificence of its palaces, temples, and public buildings.

Africa became not merely the granary of Rome, but a breeding-ground for Roman citizens, a school of art and letters, and the cradle of Western Christianity. Several of the Roman Emperors, including Septimius Severus, one of the greatest, were African born. It was the African bishops, Tertullian

in the first century, Cyprian in the second, and Augustine in the third, who built up the Church which later became the official religion of Rome.

Nor was Carthage a mere isolated foothold. The frontier was pushed far south to the Sahara. Roads, bridges, aqueducts, and irrigation works led to a marvellous development of the resources of the country, and numerous splendid cities reproduced the institutions of Rome. For five centuries the new province was as Roman as Italy. And yet, after all this effort and all these centuries of success, something was



TUNISIAN GREENGROCER AT HIS PAVEMENT STALL

Shop fittings are reduced to the minimum in the souks of Tunis, often comprising no more than a pair of scales on an upturned box. The most respectable old greengrocer derogates not a whit from his dignity by spreading his meagre stock on a bit of sacking on the pavement and squatting on his hams beside it, while chaffing over the price of his dates and figs and greenstuff

*Photo, Donald McLeish*





#### CENTAUR-LIKE SPAHI ON THE TUNISIAN SANDS

His immense desert hat is the most striking article of the Spahi's costume—a vast confection, three times the size of a Mexican cowboy's hat, a yard across, two feet high, and decorated with huge leather leaves. So crowned, and wrapped in a flowing white burnous, he sits erect, high-throned on a saddle glowing with gilt and crimson, and with his feet thrust into barbaric stirrups



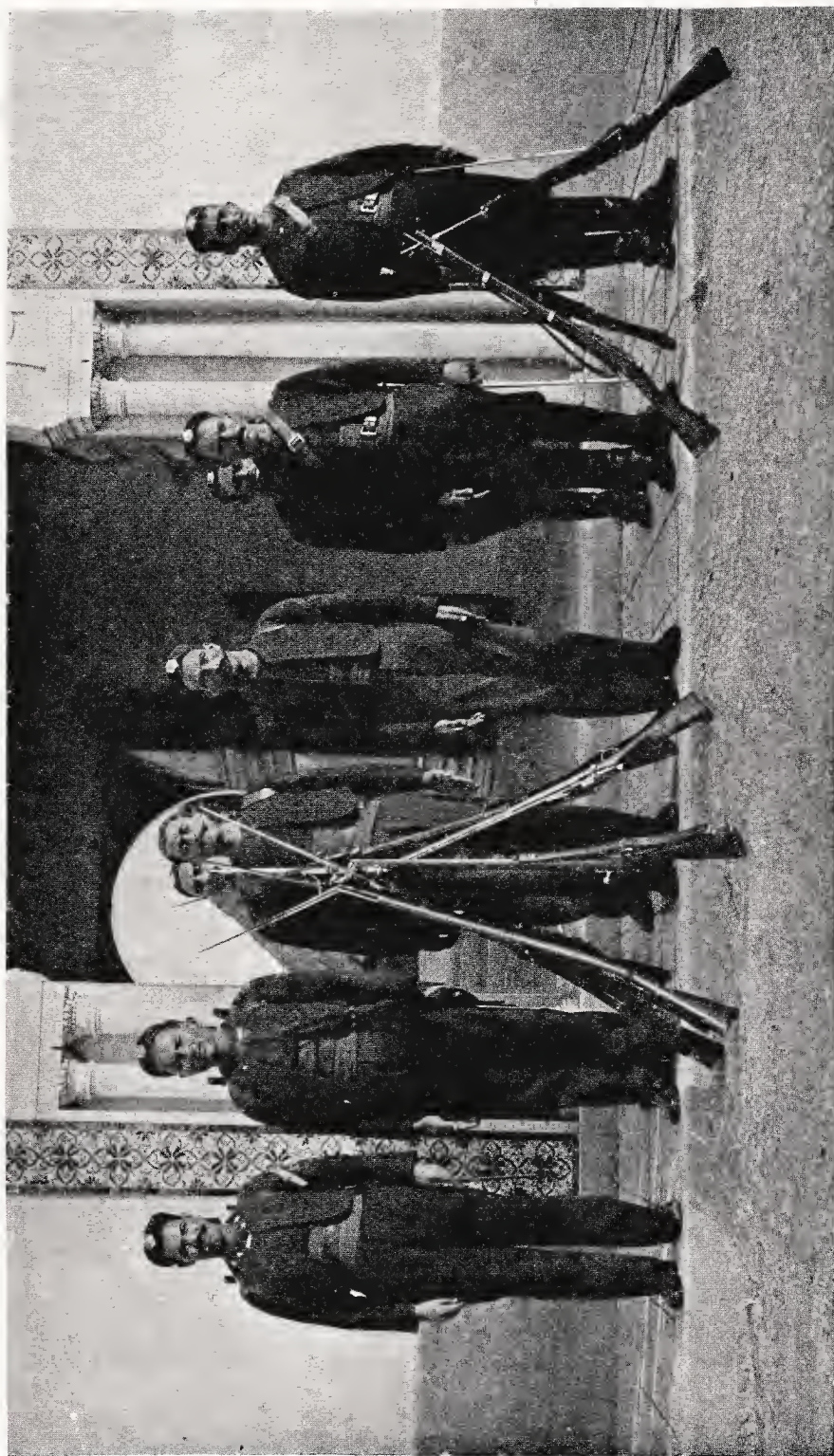


#### FRANCE'S IRON HAND CONCEALED WITHIN A VELVET GLOVE

French authority is exercised in Tunis with remarkable consideration for native susceptibilities. To all outward seeming the native life pursues its long accustomed way free from foreign interference; but under the very shadow of the mosque that rises just within the gateway dividing the French from the Arab city, sentries in French service guard the approaches to the seat of the regency

*Photo, Donald McLeish*





**SUBSTANTIAL REPRESENTATIVES OF SHADOWY AUTHORITY: HORSE, FOOT, AND ARTILLERY OF THE BEY OF TUNIS**  
France maintains an army of occupation in Tunis and keeps absolute control of everything affecting the defence of her protectorate. The French, however, recognize the wisdom of allowing the natives at large to believe in the survival of the administrative authority of their Bey, and in pursuance of this policy the Bey is permitted to maintain a certain number of troops—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—whose services, nevertheless, are almost exclusively spectacular. They are quartered in barracks at the Bardo, the old-time winter palace of the Beys of Tunis.

*Photo, Donald McLeish.*





#### NATIVE TROOPER OF THE BEY'S CAVALRY AT THE BARDO

Arabs like soldiering, and volunteer readily for service in the Tirailleurs, Spahis, and Gendarmerie, who form part of the French garrison in Tunis. Others enter the Beylical army, whose uniform is modelled closely on that of the French Zouaves and Chasseurs d'Afrique. Half of the Bey's military force is quartered in the Bardo, outside which this well-mounted cavalryman is awaiting orders.

*Photo, Donald McLeish*

wrong with Roman civilization in Africa. The plant bourgeoned and blossomed, but it struck no deep roots. Fierce religious schisms racked the state with civil strife. A handful of Vandals found it an easy conquest; and then, just when it was recovering from that blow, the name, the language, the religion, the civilization of Rome were utterly obliterated by the Arab conquerors from the East. The religion of Mahomet held universal sway, and it has since held the land in a grip which has not been relaxed for thirteen centuries.

It is only a hundred years ago since France occupied Algiers and set out

once more upon the great adventure of Europeanising Africa in which Rome had failed. In 1881 she advanced another stage by the occupation of Tunis, and only after the first decade of the twentieth century has she commenced the occupation of Morocco. The tricolour now flies from the Gulf of Gabes to the Atlantic.

The town of Tunis, built on a low neck of land between two lagoons, offers a remarkable contrast to Algiers, which climbs up a steep hillside embowered in orange, lemon, and palm groves. It is a much larger city and the process of Europeanisation has made less headway. In Algiers

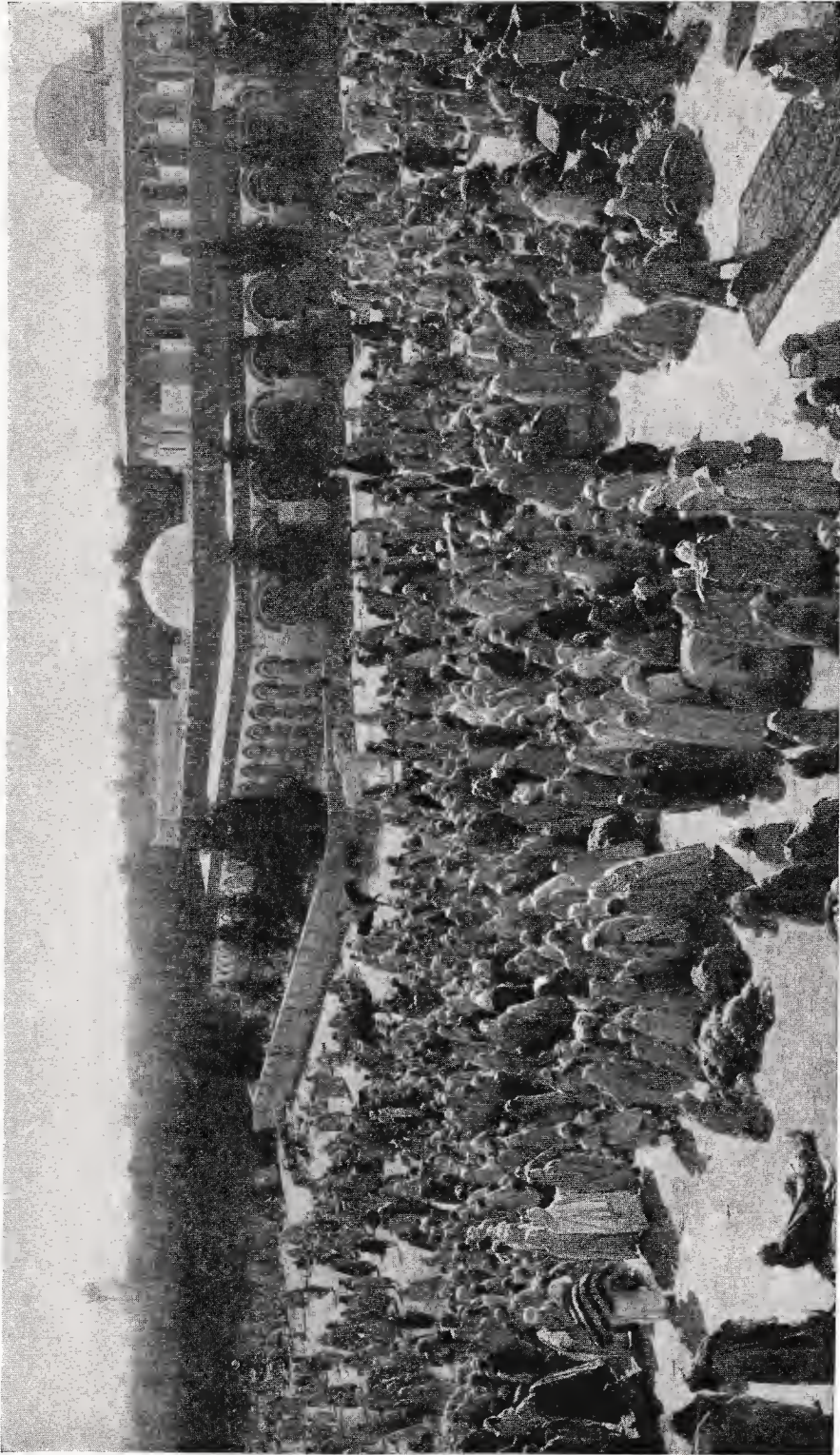




**SQUADRON OF SPAHIS, THE FAMOUS NORTH AFRICAN CAVALRY OFFICERED BY FRENCHMEN**

Synonymous with the word "sepoy," spahi from the Persian "sipahi" simply means soldier. Originally the Spahis were mounted troops supplied to the Sultan of Turkey by his feudal lords and had a great military reputation. When the French occupied Algiers and Tunis these troops were made a unit of the French army. Their uniform consists of blue breeches, red jacket, and two burnouses or cloaks, a red one flowing behind and a white one covering the shoulders. Round the head is bound, besides the turban, a length of cord made of camel hair





PRODUCE FROM THE HINTERLAND AND ITS VENDERS IN THE MARKET BY THE MOSQUE

Bundles of merchandise, carpets, pottery, woolstuffs, that are being unloaded from the grunting camels, olives and dates being stacked for sale, and everywhere a babel of voices and a flutter of white burnouses, all under the blazing heat and glare, give the observer an impression of confusion in which, nevertheless, much business is done. In the background the weary beasts, camels and horses, are being unsaddled, while in the right-hand corner of the photograph is a rich carpet that glows with colour, and upon which the proprietor proudly squats,





#### MENDICANT STREET ARABS OUTSIDE A MOSQUE IN TUNIS

Absolutely no shame attaches to the practice of mendicity in Tunis, and many of the natives take to it almost in infancy. Impudence is often more effective than necessity in extracting money from the pockets of the prosperous, and these children are only samples of a juvenile crowd that pesters travellers in the streets of Tunis, and does pretty well out of the occupation

*Photo, Donald McLeish*





#### WARES THAT ATTRACT THE SWEET-TOOTHED—AND THE FLIES

Sweetmeats of many kinds have a large sale in Tunis. Nougat, a delicious confection of sweet paste filled with chopped almonds or pistachio-nuts, is heaped in the forefront of the sweet-stalls in the bazaars, and exposed for sale on trestles by venders in the streets. Beignets are another very popular sweetmeat, a kind of fritter, not unlike a doughnut fried in oil





WHERE THE BEARERS OF MERCHANDISE MAKE THEIR EXITS AND THEIR ENTRANCES: THE OLD "NEW GATE."

Many of the houses in Tunis are built from fragments of old war-smitten Carthage, whose skeleton, partly unearched, lies two miles away. But the buildings in the souks, or bazaars, are of humbler and more rough-and-ready appearance. This photograph shows a portion of the outskirts of the bazaar quarter and the Moorish arch of the Bab Djedid or "New Gate" that here pierces the old town wall. In the foreground to the right a bread seller chaffers with a customer

*Photo, J. Dearden Holmes*





#### VENDERS OF VIANDS AND VEGETABLES IN THE SOUK EL AASSAR

Traffic is constant in the Souk el Aassar, an open square in the native quarter of Tunis, for not only are bread and meat and vegetables sold here, but it is also the rendezvous of the minstrels and storytellers. The dome in the background marks the marabout or grave of "My Lord Bel Khir," much frequented by Moslem women, who may not enter the mosques to pray

*Photo, J. Dearden Holmes*

everyone can speak French; in Tunis only the younger generation can. An Arab interpreter is necessary if one wishes to have much conversation with the natives. In Algiers the stranger may visit any mosque; in Tunis Europeans are strictly excluded from all the mosques. In Algiers the Orient is hidden away behind a French front; in Tunis the Orient is everywhere.

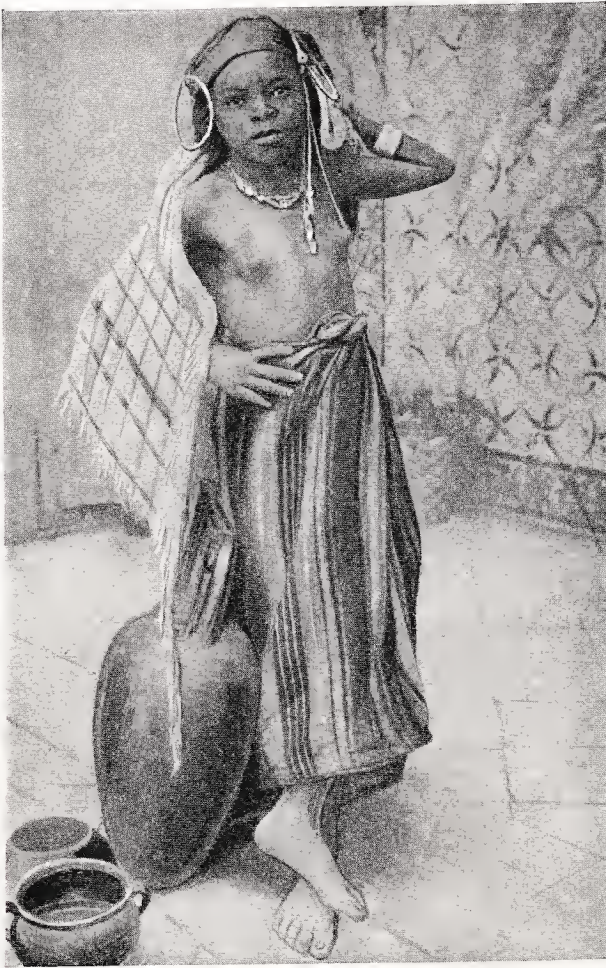
The souks of Tunis, the native shopping quarter of the city, are a world in themselves. From the spacious Avenue Jules Ferry, which might be a section of the Champs Elysées, one passes through the massive Roman-like arch of the Porte de France, into an intricate maze of narrow lanes. Each craft has its own street, or souk, which has been vaulted or roofed over like an arcade to afford a welcome shade from the glare of the African sun.

The country of Tunis is famous for its scents, the southern territories producing a multitude of aromatic and balsamic herbs and perfumed flowers. To find the perfume souk in the city it is literally true that one has only to follow one's nose, though one has to run the gauntlet of many other distracting Oriental smells. The slipper makers' souk, the tailors' souk, the fez cap makers' souk, the saddle makers' souk, the jewelers' souk, the carpet and rug souk, and the ladies' souk, where exquisite silks and embroideries are hidden away in the recesses of the most unpromising, dark, little caves, offer endless scope for exploration and bargain hunting.

In the centre of the souks is a small quadrangle arcaded round by rows of pillars painted with barbaric colours and patterns. This was the slave



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TUNISIAN DAUGHTER OF ISHMAEL

Beduin girls and women often go about extremely scantily clad and are far from particular about personal cleanliness. Their graceful figures are shown to advantage when they are carrying on their heads their large Oriental water-pots

market of old, and here, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, after a successful pirate raid, the corsairs displayed their captives. The arches were the gateways to shame and misery for many a Christian man and woman.

An Arab café flanks one side of the square, and here, on a bench outside the door, one may sit sipping a cup of sweet, thick, Turkish coffee and looking upon a scene as strange as may be seen in any bazaar from Cairo to Samarkand. Even such was the market place of Phoenician Carthage twenty-five centuries ago. The methods, the

types, the temperament have changed but little.

A dozen auctions are proceeding of articles of dress and jewelry. The runners bear the articles through the dense crowd shouting out the latest bids. Here comes an eagle-beaked Phoenician, his fingers laden with rings. They are his stock-in-trade. Stop him and he will let you examine them all. The Arab bur-nous has all the appearance of a Roman toga. Grinning negroes shoulder their way through the throng. Jews with heavy eye-lids watch like falcons for bargains. Shock haired and ragged marabouts, or holy men, and fierce-eyed dervishes, like John the Baptist, from the desert gather alms. Bearded and turbaned Arabs, true sons of the Prophet, sit crosslegged on the café benches and gaze meditatively upon the turmoil.

The changeless East! Said the Prophet Ezekiel in his lamentation for Tyre (xxvii, 12): "Tarshish was thy merchant

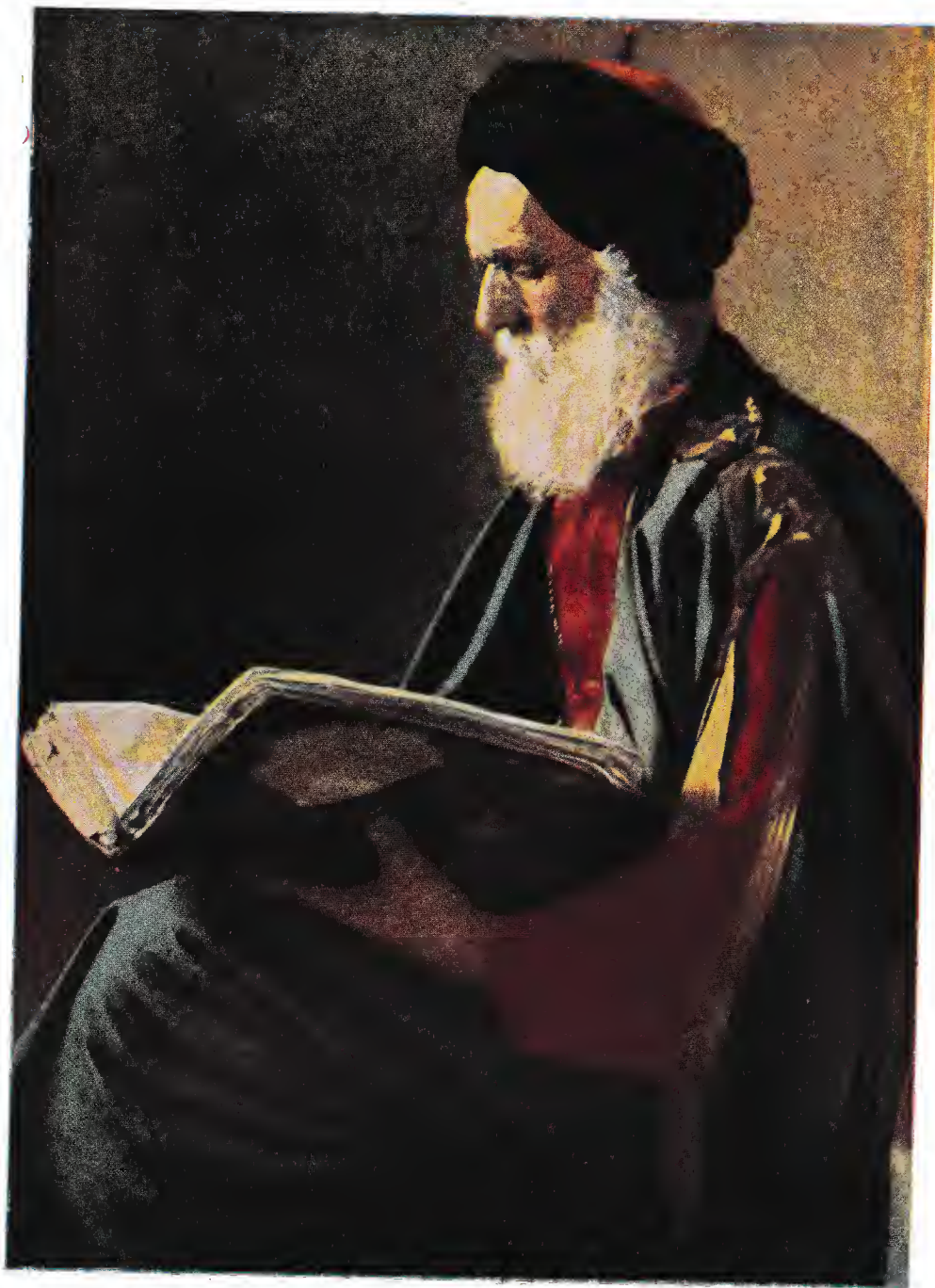
by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead they traded in thy fairs." Tarshish was the ancient name for the district which includes Carthage and Tunis, and "Tarshish and the isles" referred to in the seventy-second Psalm, is an apt description of the Phoenician metropolis of the West which dominated the islands of the Mediterranean.

It was to Tarshish that the ship was bound on which Jonah sailed before his adventure with the whale. Both S. Augustine and S. Jerome believed Tarshish to be identical with Carthage,



# *TUNISIANS TO-DAY*

## *Dwellers in Town & Tent*



*Like the lawgiver and seer of ancient Jewry this Tunisian Rabbi is dedicated to the study of the civil and canonical law of his people*





*The sun-kissed comeliness of young Beduin mothers and their plump brown babies is seen to full advantage in the favoured Tunisian clime*





*The Beduin woman's fondness for richly coloured clothing and fantastic trinkets detracts nothing from her devotion to her offspring*





*The Beduins, or desert dwellers, are a handsome people, tanned to the colour of the soil over which it is their lot to wander*





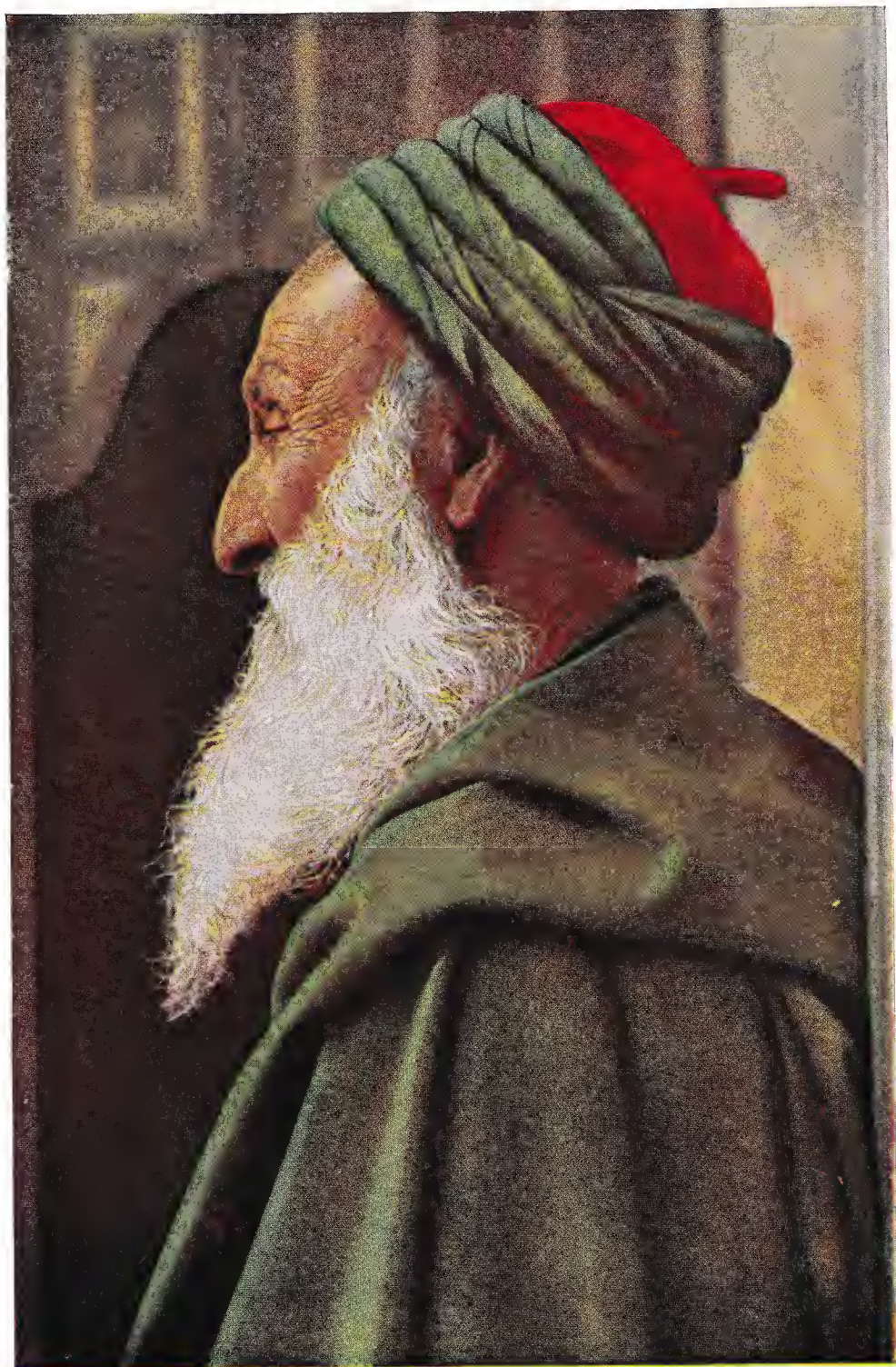
*The blind beggar and his child guide are a too familiar sight of the "souks" of Tunis and the market-places of any Tunisian town*





*Laughter has little place in the eyes of the town Arabs of Tunis, but the children are as care free as their parents are poverty-stricken*





*A kindly humour plays about his eyes, denoting a momentary relaxation of the venerable dignity of this Jewish Rabbi of Tunis city*





*Like their hardy beasts, these Arab cameleers are tough and sinevy with long tracking about the Tunisian wastes ;  
by day crawling drowsily over the sun-baked sands, by night resting under the limitless African sky*



and the scene of Jonah being disgorged by the whale is a favourite subject for pictorial representation in mosaic or terra-cotta in the early Christian Roman remains which are constantly being unearthed by the excavator.

The Mahomedan women of Tunis are even more closely veiled than those of Algiers. Upper class women are practically never seen in the streets of the city, their few journeys being made in carefully screened carriages. The women of the middle class, when they go out, in addition to being veiled, hold in front of them, hanging from their heads, like a curtain, a richly-patterned piece of silk which enables them to see only a few yards of pavement in front of them.

In Algiers the veil affected by the women of the tradesman class is white, crossing the face in two bands, leaving a narrow slit through which the eyes peer. In Tunis a startling effect is produced by the veils being of jet black crape. At the first encounter with one of these black-visaged spectres in the street one starts with a shudder as if one had been suddenly confronted by a ghoul. It takes several days before one can see them without a shock.

The Arab and all his kin squat cross-legged or sit on their heels. The custom seems ineradicable. He does it as instinctively and automatically as a dog turns round several times before going to rest. He squats beside his work when he should be working. He squats at the door of his shop. He



SATIN-BREECHED DAUGHTER OF ISRAEL

Tunisian Jewesses' favourite costume includes a short white muslin dressing-jacket, white satin knee breeches, often richly embroidered, gay socks, small slippers, and on the head a kind of fool's cap of gilt brocade, covered with a veil

squats on a bench at the café sipping coffee or playing chess. He squats on the pavement waiting for the car. If he is provided with a chair he squats on it cross-legged. He has no use for European furniture in his house. The only piece of furniture he understands and appreciates is a mat or a rug. The squatting instinct has been inbred for thousands of years. It was thus that Job and his three friends squatted as they sat among the ashes.

Beggar's assistant is one of the recognized professions in Tunis. As





#### OBSTINATE CONSERVATISM OF SAWYERS IN TUNIS

Despite their congenital dislike of hard work Orientals display unanimous reluctance to save themselves labour by adopting mechanical appliances not employed by their forefathers. These Arabs on the Tunisian littoral put themselves to the same trouble of readjusting the tree-trunk they are sawing after the severance of each section, as is incurred by the Indian sawyers illustrated in page 2803



#### TUNISIAN ARTISTS HAND-PAINTING POTTERY

Tunis has enjoyed a merited reputation for its pottery for a hundred years and more, and a considerable number of men are still employed in the industry. Even in the cheapest Tunisian ware the decoration of each piece shows the variation and irregularity that so charmingly distinguish the handiwork of individual craftsmen from the monotony of stereotyped designs mechanically reproduced





#### WHILING A QUIET HOUR AWAY WITH A GAME OF CARDS

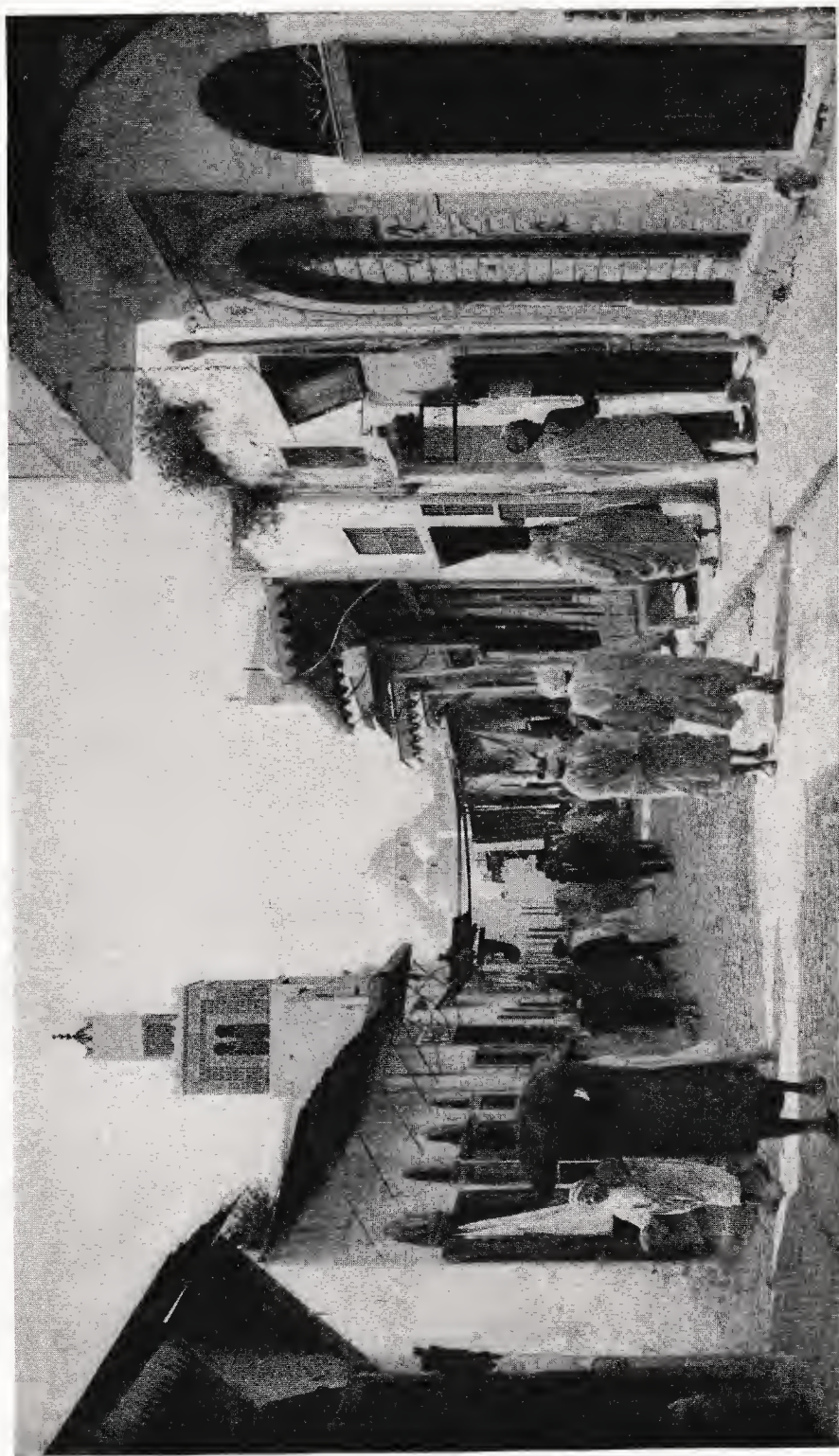
By some authorities the invention of playing cards is assigned to the Arabs. While their origin remains obscure it is probable that they were introduced into Europe either from Arabia in crusading days, or by the Moors when they entered Spain. Naib, or cards, was a widespread amusement among the Arabs, and in Tunis to-day Arabs often enjoy a game of cards over their coffee and pipe



#### PREHENSILE TOES THAT SUPPLY THE POWER FOR A SIMPLE LATHE

There is no noise of whirring shaft and wheel in this sunlit workshop, for the workman's foot does the work of an "endless band" in turning this crude lathe. Yet the results are sufficiently accurate and symmetrical, as may be gauged from a glance at the chair-leg upon which the Arab boy is working. He braces his heel against a block of wood and holds the tool with his left hand





SUNSHINE AND SHADOW ON BRIGHT COLOURS IN A COBBLED STREET OF TUNIS

From early light to sundown the traders of Tunis, Arabs and Jews, sit at their shops in the various bazaars. On all sides arise the bustle and chatter of bargain and counter-bargain, and the advent of a European is the signal for a sort of general post. Swarms of eager figures in flowing draperies throng round and offer to show the visitor all the sights, though the real object of these touts is to get the supposedly wealthy foreigner into some particular shop and pester him to buy





#### DESERT SCHOOL IN ITS TEMPORARY QUARTERS BY A SHADY OASIS

Each with his copy of the Koran in his hands, the young pupils squat in a dutiful half-circle about their master. The books consist of a number of leaves, fastened together at the top by a string passed through them. As a rule, these desert wanderers are less strict about the formalities of their faith than the sedentary population of the towns; nor do the women trouble much about being veiled. It is a free life, bounded only by the borders of the desert.

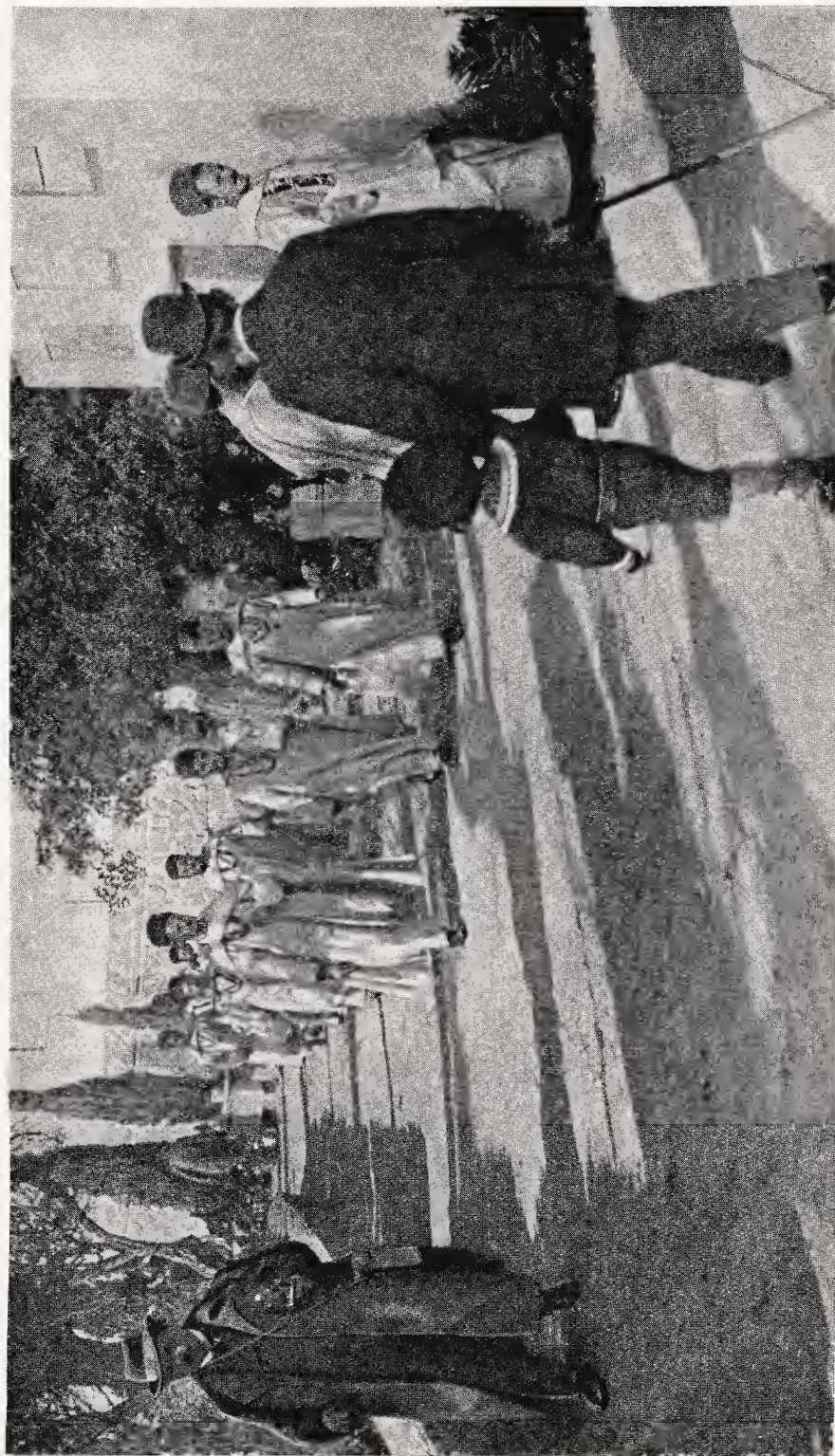




### STREET LIFE IN THE SOUK EL AASSAR, UNCHANGED SINCE TUNIS WAS RULED BY ITS OWN BEYS

Under French control the native city of Tunis has lost hardly anything of its Arab character. Though cleaner, less malodorous, and much healthier than of yore, there are still winding streets, narrow blind alleys, and open squares that are almost exactly what they were under the jurisdiction of the Beys. Notable among these survivals of the old time is the Souk el Aassar, with its tiny shops packed into the arcaded walls, its cobbled pavement trodden by the slipped feet of turbaned, shrouded Moslems, its flat-rooted, whitewashed eaves of houses, and its unviolated mosque





# HOLIDAY TRAFFIC ON THE BYRSA: TRAGIC SITE OF THE ACROPOLIS OF ANCIENT CARTHAGE

History records no more savage atrocity than the obliteration of ancient Carthage by the treachery of her jealous rival, Rome. Of the Punic city that held 700,000 inhabitants, not one stone now stands upon another. On this sun-bathed hill, the Byrsa, stood its principal temples and its citadel, where fifty thousand Carthaginians were crowded on the last day of their agony. Now the site is occupied by the cathedral and monastery of the White Fathers of the Desert, and curious tourists wander through the garden and museums that have replaced the mighty fortress of antiquity





#### CAMEL-BORNE PALANQUINS FOR ARAB WOMEN IN THE DESERT

Arab women of the better class travel in palanquins resembling square tents erected on the humps of camels. Gaudy striped cloth is stretched round the framework of the tent, giving an odd cage-like effect to the contrivance viewed from a little distance. When on the move over the desert, the servant women walk beside the camels, and men on horseback guard the caravan

you pause at the door of a mosque a stout fellow will run up with some unsightly and shapeless cripple on his back craving alms. As you sit at one of the little tables in front of a café a well-grown lad who in England would be apprenticed to a trade, will lead up a pitiful object whose livid face is scarred with smallpox, will point to his eyes and his dumb outstretched hand, and refuse to move away until a coin has been produced. Next day, or even the same day, he will beset you again if you chance to occupy the same place. If any other beggar ventures to poach upon this hunting-ground he will drive him off with blows and objurgations: his is the first claim to any possible generosity the stranger may be induced to display.

Another man who could earn a good living as a navvy leads an aged dwarf along the pavement appealing to passers-by to notice his misfortunes. It is not always easy to distinguish which is exploiter and which exploited. Each in his way is necessary to the livelihood of the other and can thus demand his rights; nevertheless, I rather fancied that the cripple who was carried up to the door of the mosque was a regular Old Man of the Sea to his assistant.

Tunis is a city of many nationalities, the main elements of which have changed little in thousands of years. The Arabs retain the characteristics of their patriarchal ancestors of the days of Abraham. The "Jews" are to a large extent the survivors of the Phoenicians, a kindred Semitic race.

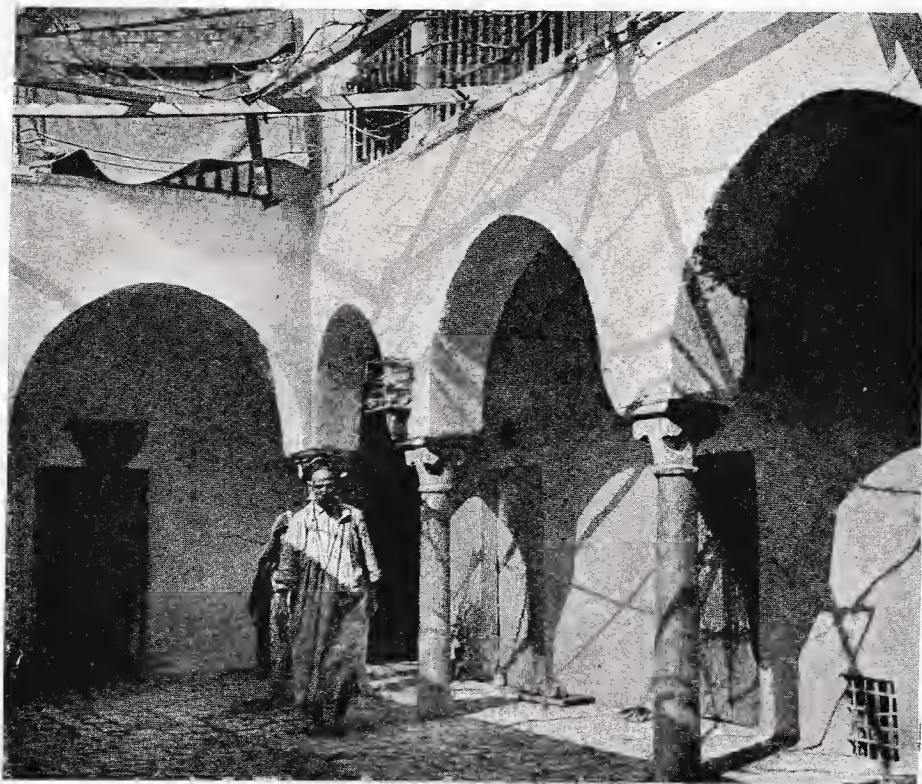


They are in many respects different from the Jews of other countries. Jezebel, of unhappy memory, was a "Jewess" of this stock. These modern Phoenicians are not only keen traders but excellent craftsmen, and they are very tenacious of their ancient customs, costumes, and social habits.

The Italians and Maltese are a very numerous colony, greatly outnumbering

Jules Ferry, with their shops, their cafés, and their tree-shaded promenades, the Frenchman finds again the Paris that he loves.

The country of Tunis is divided geographically into three well-marked belts. The north is mountainous, enclosing some well-watered and fertile plains like those round the Gulf of Tunis and the valley of the Medjerda.



WITHIN THE COURTYARD OF A TUNISIAN DROVERS' INN

Arab Tunis has a number of old fondouks—inns where the accommodation for man is vastly inferior to that for beast. An entrance passage, with watchmen's benches on either side, leads into a courtyard where the camels can rest, and low arches, set upon antique columns, form a sort of surrounding cloister affording shelter from rain and sun. Doors in the back wall lead into separate stables

*Photo, J. Dearlen Holmes*

the French and keeping to their own quarter, which has all the appearance of an Italian town. These are the modern Romans. They have never forgiven the French for forestalling them in the occupation of Tunis, which Italy had long coveted as her special heritage from the past. In the spacious Avenue de France and Avenue de

The south is desert, diversified by numerous oases in which the date palm yields a golden harvest. Tunis dates are famous all over the world for their excellence. Between the mountains and the desert lies a broad belt of rolling steppes, which in its lower levels, along the coast, is known as the Sahel (coast belt), and is of extraordinary





#### ARAB DANCING GIRLS PERFORMING IN A PRIVATE HOUSE

Physical undulation is the essential feature of the dance as performed in Tunis by professional dancers. On a stretched carpet the dancer takes her stand, and, to the thin music of flute and strummed strings, waves rhythmically on scarcely moving feet, supple fingers, wrists, and arms curving in serpentine lines, hips swaying. In the Oriental setting the performance is strangely intoxicating to the senses

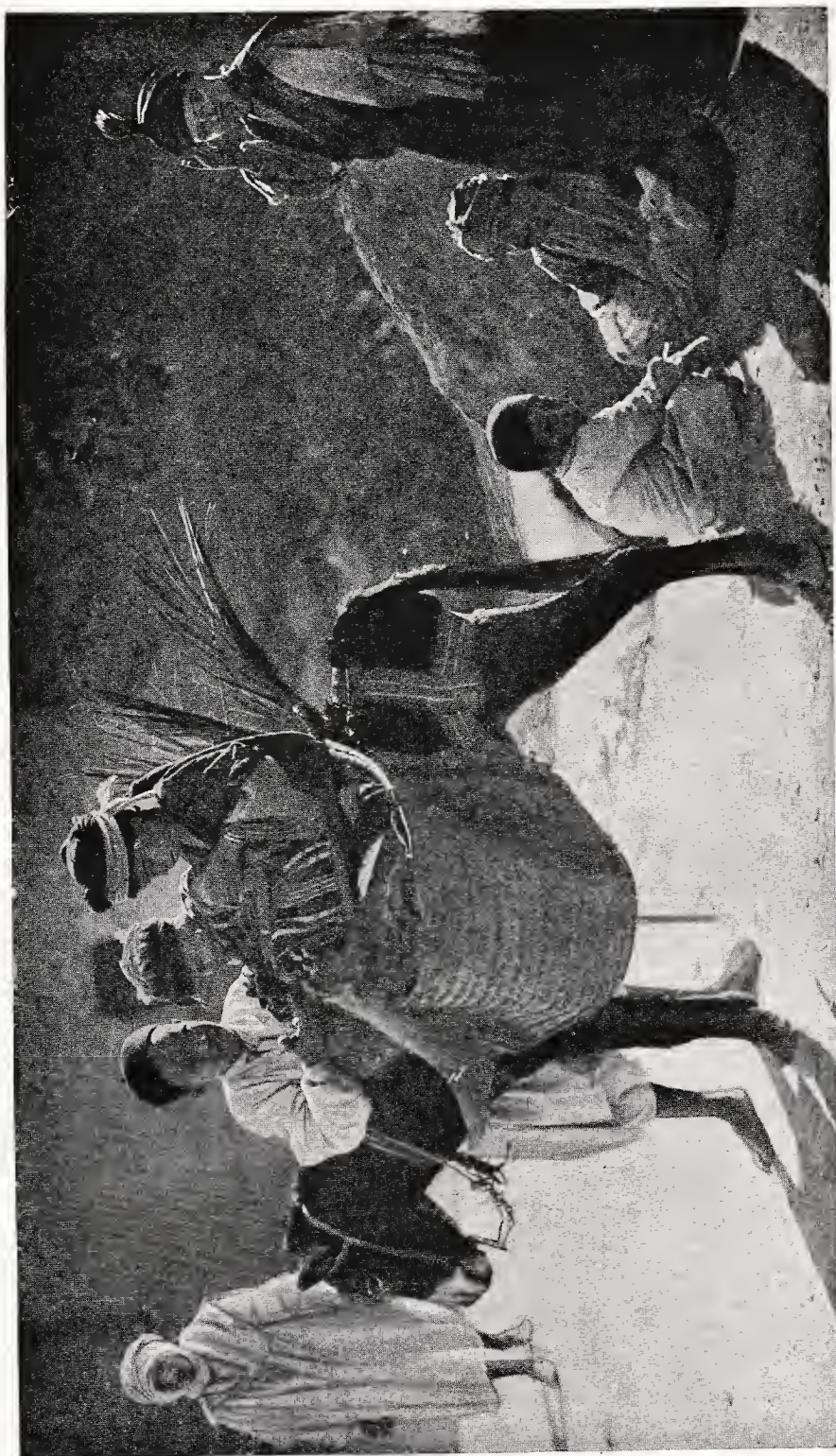




#### HUMAN LINK WITH TUNISIA'S IMMEMORIAL PAST

For an indefinite number of hundreds of years serving women like this have been familiar figures in Tunis, patient creatures preserving good humour in joyless conditions. The fashion of the scanty striped skirt is as unchanged as the shape of the fibula brooch, huge ear-rings, and solid silver armlets and bracelets, and the amphora in which water is drawn is of immemorial antiquity in ware and design





#### YOUTHFUL DONKEY DRIVER RECEIVES HIS HIRE: A WAYSIDE EPISODE

Patient as ever, but under an unusually light load, the donkey stands while his young driver collects his fare. The elder child, in charge of her little sister, carefully watches the transaction that the little one has begged to be allowed to make. Soon she will have other cares, for at thirteen most Tunis girls take the veil, the sign of womanhood, and may be mothers a year later. But now, in the last few years of childhood, she may go about unveiled and free among the teeming, vivid ways of this city of shadow and fierce hatreds, of sunshine and easy laughter



## TUNIS & ITS PEOPLES

fertility. This central belt of Sahel and steppe was known to the Romans as Byzacium. It is thickly studded, even where now the desert reigns, with the ruins of Roman cities, villages, and villas, showing that at one time it must have been much more densely populated than it is to-day. The soil only requires irrigation to be as fruitful again. Under French rule the Roman prosperity is returning.

In Algeria the French method of colonisation has been by sales and free grants of land to small farmers. The agricultural development of Tunis has been undertaken by great joint-stock companies which have applied their capital to irrigation works and to scientific organization with most gratifying success. Examples of these great estates may be seen at Mateur and Beja, in the Medjerda valley, and at Enfidaville, in the Sahel.

Wheat, olives, grapes, oranges, almonds, figs, and tobacco are produced in abundance. No sight could be more grateful to the eye than the little French town of Enfidaville, with its red roofs and white walls, which has grown up amid the palms and the orange and olive groves. But France has still far to go before the country as a whole reaches the standard of Roman prosperity.

In sharp contrast to the French townships which have sprung up in these favoured areas is the purely Mahomedan town of Kairwan. It lies high up on the steppes in the midst of a plain on which are reared herds of camels, dromedaries, horses, donkeys, sheep,



BEDUIN WOMAN OF TUNIS

A Beduin woman who has any pretensions to dress is seldom without a display of her native ornaments. Heavy silver ear-rings, brooches, and necklaces of varied design are much in vogue; this jewelry often representing a good part of the husband's capital

and goats. Kairwan was founded by the Arab conqueror Sidi Okba thirty-eight years after the death of the Prophet, and it soon became the capital of the Arab Empire in Africa and the most holy of all the Mahomedan cities. Seven pilgrimages to Kairwan are regarded as equal to one to Mecca itself.

At certain seasons Kairwan (or Kairouan) is crowded with pilgrims. Its numerous mosques are full of archæological and architectural interest, and, strangely enough, this most holy city is the only one in which the French have insisted that the mosques should be open to European visitors. The city is still surrounded by the ancient wall, and it





#### QUIETUDE OF THE MOSQUE AMID THE BABEL OF THE MART

Encased in tiles, illumined to peacock radiance by the brilliant Eastern sunshine, this small mosque is one of many that rise above the welter of little shops huddled around their base in the native quarter of Tunis. Much more punctilious in their religious observances than the average Christian, some Moslems may invariably be found at prayer within these mosques, wherein no infidel may enter

*Photo, Donald McLeish*

bears few marks of European influence, the small French quarter being situated outside the wall.

Tunis offers a rich field of study for the historian. The ruins of Carthage, buried forty feet underground, are being excavated by the White Fathers, whose museum, beside the modern cathedral on the summit of the Byrsa, or ancient Acropolis, is full of treasure trove. When the Romans laid waste the city of their dreaded rivals, and built another city above the ruins,

they unconsciously preserved for our time the most interesting relics of Phoenician Carthage.

The excavators dug down through the cornland, through the Arab rubbish accumulated for twelve centuries, through the mosaic pavements and broken marble pillars of the early Christian basilica, through the litter of Roman bricks, tiles, pottery, and mutilated statues, and, at the foundation of all, resting on the original soil bed, they came upon all that is left





#### TUNISIAN WOMANHOOD'S ORNAMENTAL CHARM

Gold coins inherited from ancestresses deck the headdress of young Tunisian women, while a wealth of barbaric ornaments is suspended over the bosom. Tattooed marks disfigure their otherwise pleasing faces; often a tattooed cross may be seen, which some aver, though the meaning no longer exists, was the sign whereby the converts, when Christianity swept across North Africa, proclaimed their faith





#### PLUCKING RIPE FRUIT FROM BRANCHES OF DATE-PALM

Grown from the very earliest times, as Assyrian wall-paintings show, the date-palm, which is found near the same latitude between India and the Canary Islands, is still one of the chief objects of cultivation in Tunis and throughout northern Africa. When the fruit has been stripped from the branches these are used for thatching, while a certain quantity is used for religious purposes





#### MASTERPIECES OF CRAFTSMANSHIP IN COPPER AND BRASS

Some very beautiful Moorish work in copper, brass, and white metal is produced by Tunisian copper-smiths. Lamps, trays, bowls, flacons, and daggers crowd this shop in the souk of the copper-workers, and very noticeable are the beautiful brass jugs for holding potable essences—tall, slim vessels, suggesting coffee-pots, with delicately carved handles and long snaky spouts





**TUNISIAN ARTISTS DECORATING POTTERY WITH DESIGNS FAMILIAR IN THE WORK OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS**  
 Manufacture of pottery has long been a native industry in Tunis, and in the Bab-Souika suburb, some beautiful pieces are sold. A principal line of goods is a kind of majolica, mostly green and yellow, fashioned into pitchers of noble size and fine simplicity and into water-bottles of fantastic shape. Another characteristic ware is a pale, reddish-streaked, sun-baked pottery decorated with geometrical or conventional figures in black, both design and shape being almost exact reproductions of prehistoric Greek pottery of the Mycenaean age





**TUNIS, "THE WHITE CITY," BASKING IN ITS GLORIOUS SUNSHINE**

Tunis is the purest Oriental city in Africa west of Egypt. Viewed from an altitude, as by this cloaked and turbaned Arab, it stretches a dazzling white expanse of rectangular, flat-roofed, stone and plaster houses. The monotony of line and colour is broken by numerous low green-tiled domes of marabouts, and the square towers, encased in variegated tiles, of some five hundred mosques

*Photo, G. Long*

of Phoenician civilization. The Phoenician tombs, protected for two thousand years by these accumulated ruins, have yielded a vast store of gold and silver trinkets, jewels, amulets, images, carvings, vases, and other articles which throw a flood of light upon the history and social and religious customs of a civilization which was contemporary with King Solomon.

But Carthage does not stand alone. The whole of Tunis, from the sea to the farthest frontiers, deep in the recesses of the mountains and in the oases of the desert, is one vast monument of the splendour of Roman civilization. The gigantic aqueduct which brought the waters of Zaghwan eighty miles to Carthage, the stupendous amphitheatre of El-Djemm rising from the side of a squalid Arab village, the numerous roads and bridges, and

the ruined cities of Dougga, Maetaris Admedera, Sufetula; Cillium, Thelepte, Gigthis, and a dozen others, all bear witness to the previous existence of a prosperity which France exhibits a determination to recreate.

Algeria is governed as an incorporate part of France, represented directly in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies in Paris. Tunis, on the other hand, is a protectorate. The Bey is a member of the Royal Family which has occupied the throne since 1705. The government is controlled by the French Foreign Office much as the Egyptian Government has been controlled by the British Foreign Office in recent years. The form of government is native, but it is a European civilization which they are trying to create. And always they keep before their eyes the example of their great precursor, Rome.





#### NEED WAITING ON CHARITY AT THE PORTAL OF THE MOSQUE

Beggars are ubiquitous in Tunis, and many of them are repulsive objects. Any physical deformity or affliction is employed to move the compassion of the charitable, and dwarfs and cripples, blind and deaf and dumb, dog the stranger and even employ sturdy assistants to lead or carry them to wherever alms may be forthcoming. The doors of the mosques are always beset by piteous mendicants

*Photo, Donald McLeish*



# Tunis

## II. From Carthaginian Empire to French Protectorate

By Edward Wright

Author of "France: Her Colonial Empire," etc.

OF all the overseas possessions of France, Tunis is most deeply coloured with the romance of history. From the legend of Dido and the Trojans to the last tale of the Tunis corsairs, her harbours, fields, and desert tracks glow with glories and adventures of great races.

Probably three and a half thousand years are gone since the merchant seamen of Sidon landed on the coast by old Utica, some twenty miles north-west of Carthage, and dazzled the fair-haired Berbers with bales of purple linen and beads of coloured glass, and obtained so much gold, ivory, and ostrich feathers that they set up trading stations. Then, perhaps in the ninth century B.C., a strong, fierce syndicate of Tyrians, seeing that the best harbour was not being used, took the Bay of Tunis and built a citadel a little north of it, which was known as New Town, or Carthage.

They dug out an extraordinary combination of war port and trading port by their high citadel, and from these great ponds, that still exist, near the still more extraordinary rain-water cisterns which they made in order to withstand sieges, their fleets went out for copper to Spain and for tin to England.

They traded south beyond the Sahara, and explored the coast of Africa at least as far as the Congo. In league with the Persians, they fought the Greeks, and like their

successors, the Saracens of Tunis, they made a strong attempt to hold and enslave the old cornland of Sicily.

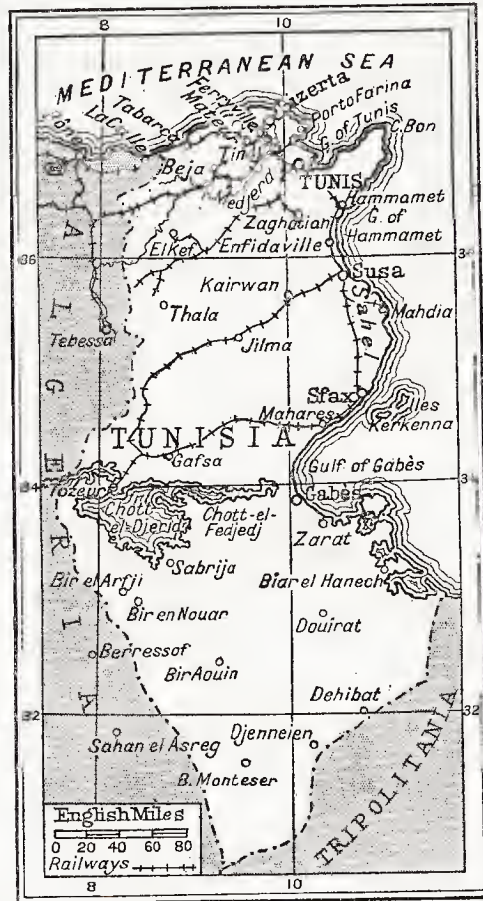
They conquered Sardinia and Corsica, and established the first connexion between Gaul and Tunis by occupying, some time before 500 B.C., a considerable part of the Gulf of Lyons.

Then, from 264 to 201 B.C., ancient Tunis rose to her supreme and terrible height of power. Her son, Hannibal, rocked civilization to its foundations by his victories over the armies of Rome. It was only through party dissensions in Carthage itself, destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C., that the world was saved

from all the ghastly and licentious rites now buried under the ruins of its former greatness.

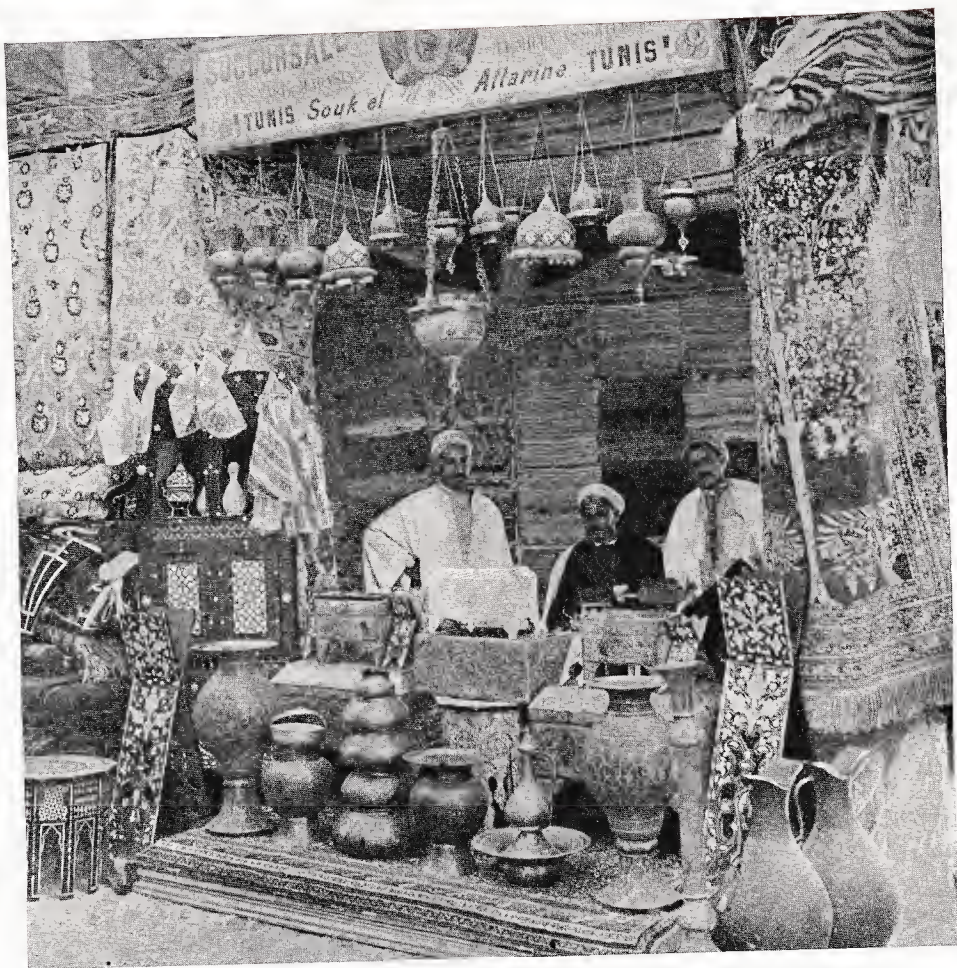
In the early Christian period the mingled Carthaginian and Berber stock of Tunis exercised a religious influence upon the world by the school of thought of S. Augustine. Every modern Protestant, with a Calvinist strain of belief, has his spiritual home in Carthage. Thus strangely yet directly has the old capital of Tunis become the sacred city of Scotland, Wales, and a large part of Canada and the U.S.A.

Some centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire Tunis again became a scene of picturesque splendour and far-reaching intellectual influence. The German and Slav mixture of Vandals of the fifth century A.D. concentrated



FRENCH PROTECTORATE OF TUNIS





#### WHERE "SOUL-DISSOLVING ODOURS INVITE TO MYSTERY"

Heavy with the blend of many aromas is the Souk el Attarine, or Street of Perfumes, in the Arab quarter of Tunis. Here every shop sells the essence of sweet flowers—jasmine, musk favoured of the Prophet, lilac, iris, ambergris, sandal tree, dainty orange flower, refreshing vervain, heliotrope, citron and bergamot, and sensuous carnation, a single drop of any of which suffices to enchant the senses

*Photo, Underwood Press Service*

in Tunis, and, using Carthage as their fortress, won a considerable part of Hannibal's old empire, including Corsica, and starved and pillaged Rome. When the Vandals fell, and the Byzantines weakened, the Saracens came in the seventh century, and, after some fighting, settled below Carthage, and there built the romantic, mysterious, forbidden city of Kairwan.

Then it was that Tunis once more became a centre of radiant culture. The thinkers and artists of Kairwan spread the influence of Moslem liberalism through the conquered territory of Sicily to the European mainland.

In the next period of their own subjection to invading Normans they increased their influence rather than diminished it, by bringing about an amalgamation of Christian and Mahomedan arts and ideas in the eleventh and twelfth

centuries. The end of this movement of enlightenment, to which was largely due the greatest awakening of the European spirit since the Greek renaissance of the seventh century B.C., was followed by the disastrous crusade of S. Louis of France, who died by Carthage in 1270.

Meanwhile, the Arabs of Kairwan had been overcome by the reactionary movement of thought in Islam itself. Liberalism of mind was repressed by a new school of narrow puritans, and the Arab intellect began to sink into the bog of ignorance from which it has not yet re-emerged, leaving to the European mind the task of building the modern temple of knowledge. Menaced by united Christendom the Tunisians, while fighting the nomad Berbers for the gold and ostrich trade of the Central Sudan, built piratic fleets to prey on Mediterranean commerce. At



## TUNIS & ITS STORY

the end of the fifteenth century they were reinforced by many fugitive Moors from Spain, raging with a passion for revenge and possessing means to fit out pirate ships. Spaniards, Genoese, and Knights of S. John closed round Tunis. As the sea rovers were in danger, help arrived in the person of the renegade Greek Horuk Barbarossa, who made Tunis Harbour the centre of his predatory expeditions. His large robber state was placed under the overlordship of the Ottoman Empire in the first part of the sixteenth century, and with Turkish crews and garrisons of Turkish Janissaries, the natives were oppressed while the Mediterranean trade was being broken.

Charles V. of Germany conquered Tunis in 1535, in the hope of freeing Christian commerce, but the city was recovered by the Janissaries, who parted from Turkey, and set up their own monarchs, known as Deys. Amid incessant wars and assassinations of their puppet kings, the Tunisians continued to prey upon the merchantmen of Europe. Among their celebrated captives were Cervantes, whom they sold in Algiers in 1575, and S. Vincent de Paul, whom they brought to Tunis slave-market in 1605.

The moneys obtained as ransom for Christians were an important source of income for the Dey, who was more often than not an old corsair, selected for the throne by the Janissaries by reason of his wealth.

In 1705, at the end of a civil war, a soldier of fortune, Hussein-ben-Ali, won the throne, took the title of Bey of Tunis, made the country practically independent of Turkey, and founded the dynasty still reigning under the protection of France. In 1811 his descendant, Bey Hamouda, made himself absolute monarch by the ruthless slaughter of all the Janissaries who used to control him.

For some time piracy continued in a mild form. England had, from the age of Cromwell onward, sent fleets to Tunis to enforce treaties on Dey and Bey for the protection of her merchant ships. France had taken the same course, and by several bombardments, ending with a threat from Napoleon, had won the position of the most favoured nation. In 1816 the British Fleet, under Lord Exmouth, imposed upon the Bey a treaty for the abolition of slavery and the suppression of piracy.

This, however, had no more effect than any of the past treaties, and was observed only so long as the hostile fleet was off the shore. The Bey needed piratic revenue to maintain his state and pomp. It had become the general custom of great maritime Powers to pay him a subsidy for free passage for their merchant ships. Usually it was only when the subsidy was in arrear that the vessels of a great Power were attacked. This subsidy system was finally ended in 1830 by the French Government, after the capture of Algiers. Seized with panic and fearful of giving an occasion for attack, the Bey of Tunis agreed to abolish the enslavement of Christians and also to abandon piracy.

A succession of Beys then tried to reform their country, but the lack of the old subsidies made each attempted reform a step to national bankruptcy. As the end grew nearer Italy contended against France for possession of the little African State, which was falling sadly in population as well as in money power. Italy wanted Tunis as a balance against French Algeria, but she was forestalled, the Bey, on May 12, 1881, signing a treaty which placed himself and his country under the protection of France, a liberty which was consummated by the agreement with Ali-Bey, June 8, 1883.

## TUNIS: FACTS AND FIGURES

### The Country

Extends for about 550 miles along the Mediterranean coastline between Algeria and Tripolitania, which form the boundaries on the west and south-east respectively. North and east is the Mediterranean. The north coast district and the north central regions are hilly and fertile, and there are a number of almost perennial streams. Farther into the interior the hills become desert steppes and merge into the Sahara. There are a number of salt lakes, many of which dry up in summer. Total area about 50,000 square miles, with a European population of about 156,000 and an estimated native population of 1,938,000.

### Government and Constitution

Country is ruled by a native Bey, who holds the sovereignty under French protectorate. Government is in hands of French Foreign Office represented by a French Resident-General, who is assisted by a ministry of eight French and three Tunisian members. Territory is divided into

nineteen districts for administrative purposes, the chief official in each district being French, and assisted by native subordinates.

### Commerce and Industries

Main industry is agriculture. Chief crops are barley, wheat, and oats. Vines, olives, and dates are cultivated, as well as almonds, pistachios, oranges, lemons, alfa grass, cork-trees, and henna. Among minerals are phosphates, lead-ore, iron, and zinc-ore. Native industries include carpet and wool weaving, saddlery, leather embroidery, and pottery. Fisheries are developed and yield anchovies, tunny, and sardines. Imports, valued at £28,868,008 in 1921, include textiles, manufactured metals, and meaty foods. Among main exports are marble, stone and minerals, crude metals, and grain. Total exports for same year valued at £26,915,756. French coinage is in use.

### Chief Towns

Tunis, capital (estimated population 171,600), Bizerta (20,700), Ferryville (4,600), Tindja (1,500).





CONSTANTINOPLE'S MOST FAMOUS EDIFICE: ONCE A CHRISTIAN BASILICA AND NOW A MOSLEM MOSQUE

The glory of the Aya Sophia Mosque is within: in the majestic sweep of its mighty dome, its precious marbles, its columns of porphyry and verd antique, its splendid mosaics. At the apex of the dome is the intricate tracery in Arabic of the passage from the Koran beginning, "God is the Light of Heaven and Earth," a thought symbolised by thousands of tiny lamps. Dedicated to Christian worship in 537 on the site of a basilica founded by Constantine in 326, it became a Moslem mosque in 1453; and was restored by an Italian architect in 1847

*Photo, H. C. Woods*